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Award and agreement coverage in Western Australia

Western Australian workers on award rates are paid an average of at least $150 a week less than employees who are covered by individual or collective agreements, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Part-time employees and labourers were those most likely to be paid award wages.

Figures released today in a special article in **Western Australian Statistical Indicators** show that in May 2000, full-time adult award-only employees had average weekly total earnings of $642, compared with the higher earnings received by full-time adult employees under collective agreements ($856) and individual agreements ($790).

Award-only employees are those paid exactly the award rate of pay. Collective agreement employees are those paid by a certified or enterprise agreement. Individual agreement employees mainly include those whose pay is set by a common law contract and employees who receive over-award payments.

Employees paid at exactly the award rate made up 18% of employees in Western Australia. Most employees had their pay set by unregistered individual agreements (39%) or registered collective agreements (33%).

Registered collective agreements set the pay for the majority of public sector employees (77%). For private sector employees, just over half (51%) were paid by unregistered individual agreements, with almost identical proportions of employees having their pay set exactly at award rates or by registered collective agreements (20% and 19% respectively).

Registered individual agreements set the pay for a small proportion of employees, 7.4% in the private sector and 5.4% in the public sector, higher proportions than in any other State or Territory.

Employees working for large employers were much more likely to have their pay set by a collective agreement, whereas employees in smaller organisations were most likely to have their pay set by individual agreements.

For Western Australian full-time adult non-managerial employees covered by an award only, females earned an average $76 a week less than males. However, when taking into account variations in the paid hours worked, the female hourly rate was $1.10 higher than the male hourly rate. When overtime earnings and hours are excluded, the difference in average hourly earnings widened, with females earning $2.40 per hour more than males. Under all other pay setting arrangements, male employees earned more per hour than females.

Details are in **Western Australian Statistical Indicators, June Quarter 2001** (cat. no. 1367.5), available from **ABS Bookshops** .

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